

Lansaran Tahol Murut Ethnic: Evolutions from Past to Present

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Abstract

Lansaran is one of the traditional culture of the Tahol Murut ethnic in the interior of Sabah. The aim of this research is to analyse on the changing function of Lansaran from the past to present. Data collected from field trips that conducted in Tahol Murut villages. By using qualitative method, interviews, observations and library were employed for data collection. This research has explained the research question on the origin of Lansaran also the different function of Lansaran and what is the cause that makes the changes of function of Lansaran. The interpretation of Lansaran's function have been used in analysing the research data. The finding found that Lansaran originally was a children game. Then it was a ritual dance in the era of head-hunting. Now, this research found that Lansaran has been newly adapted into a secular dance.

Keywords: Lansaran, ritual, secular dance, Tahol Murut Ethnic, traditional game

Introduction

Sabah is a region rich in diverse indigenous ethnic groups. The three main ethnic groups include Kadazandusun, Bajau, and Murut. Ismail Abbas and Shaong (1984) reported that Sabah has recorded at least 41 traditional dances. For example, the Kadazandusun ethnic group performs the Sumazau dance (Ismail Abbas & Shaong, 1984, p. 43; Low & Sri, 2013, p. 52). The Bajau ethnic group is known for the Runsai and Limbai dances (Ismail Abbas & Shaong, 1984, p. 52; Sri Ningsih & Low, 2018, p. 372). This research focuses on the traditional performance Lansaran of the Murut Tahol ethnic group.

In a preliminary survey, the researcher found that the Lansaran performance is widely recognized among the Murut ethnic group in the interior of Sabah. Almost all cultural villages feature Lansaran in Murut longhouses, including Mari-mari Cultural Village, Hongkod Koisan Hall (Kadazandusun Association Cultural Village, Penampang), Sabah Museum, and Murut Cultural Center. Lansaran is also popular among tourists, becoming an integral part of Murut ethnic culture. However, when asked about the origins of this performance, most members of the Murut ethnic group were unaware. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the origins of Lansaran.

Furthermore, Lansaran has been performed by the Murut Tahol ethnic group since the headhunting era, prior to the administration of Sabah by the North Borneo Chartered Company (British) in the 1880s (Low, 2001, p. 4). Initially, Lansaran was a children's game designed to fill leisure time but later evolved into a ritual performance closely associated with the Murut mengayu culture. This ritual aimed to drive away evil spirits to ensure peace. However, after the British administration banned mengayu practices, the ritual performances declined and eventually ceased. Over time, Lansaran transformed into a secular performance intended to entertain guests at public events. This shift in function represents a key area of focus in this study.

To collect research data, the researcher conducted fieldwork in Kota Kinabalu, Tenom, and Nabawan Districts (Figure 1). Fieldwork was carried out in Malampoi Village, Nabawan District Office, and Hongkod Koisan Hall during the Sabah state-level Kaamatan Festival. Data were also collected at the Murut Cultural Center in Tenom District and eight Murut Tahol ethnic villages in the Kemabong District. Additionally, the researcher visited art centers in Kota Kinabalu, such as the Sabah Museum and Mari-mari Cultural Village, to gather further information about the lives and culture of the Murut ethnic group and aspects related to Lansaran performance.

All interviews were recorded using a voice recorder, and the researcher documented the movements of informants during demonstrations of Lansaran. Before discussing the changes in the function of the Lansaran performance, it is essential to introduce the Murut Tahol ethnic group, which holds this cultural tradition.



Figure 1. Map of Sabah (Kota Kinabalu District, Tenom District and District Nabawan) (Source: Researcher modified)

Tahol Murut Ethnic: An Introduction

The term *Murut* has been used by several writers to refer to indigenous ethnic groups living in the interior of Sabah. Among them, Ismail Ibrahim (2007, p. 67), Normadiyah Nassir (2016, p. 12), and Toh and Low (2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147) have noted that the term *Murut* comes from the word *belud* or hill in the Bajau language. The word *Murut* also originates from the word *glutinous*, which means marriage (Pollard, 1935, p. 223). St. John, as cited in Ismail Ibrahim (2007, p. 67), reported that the word *Murut* comes from the word *murud* in the Lun Bawang (Sarawak) language, which means hill.

Murut represents several Murut ethnic groups in Sabah who have their own language known as Murutic (Normadiyah, 2016, p. 11; Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147). Rutter (1985, p. 34) notes that the Murut ethnic group in Sabah has been divided into two groups, namely Murut Hill (*Murut Bukit*) and Plain Murut (*Murut Valley*). Saidatul Nornis Hj. Mahali et al. (2007, p. 68) also stated that the Valley Murut is further divided into three Murut sub-ethnicities, namely Murut Timugon, Murut Nabai, and Murut Bookan, while Murut Bukit has sub-ethnicities such as Murut Tahol, Murut Paluan, Murut Okolod, Murut Sumambu, Murut Dalit, Murut Sapulut, and Murut Alumbis. Ismail Ibrahim (2007, p. 80) reported that among the Murutic languages of Sabah, Tahol is the largest group among the Murut ethnic groups, who live mostly in hilly areas and have adopted a language of their own.

The focus of this article is on the *Lansaran* performance belonging to the Tahol ethnic group. The Tahol ethnic group is one of the Murut clans in Sabah. The term *Tahol* has various other forms, such as *Tagal*, *Tagol*, and *Tagul*. Ismail Ibrahim (2007, p. 72; 2011, p. 8), as cited in Toh and Low (2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147), reported that these terms are used by the Paluan and Timugon ethnic groups to distinguish their identity from the settlement in Sungai Tahol. Based on the reports of A. Sue Harris (1990, p. 39) and Abd Hakim Mohad (2014, p. 426; 2016, p. 106), the Murut Tahol community originates from the Sungai Tahol valley in the Pensiangan District. Tom Harrison (1967) notes that the Murut Tahol ethnic group calls themselves *Ulun Tahol*, which means 'Tahol People' (as cited in Abd Hakim Mohad, 2014, p. 426). They

are also known as headhunters who live in groups and frequently relocate. Ismail Ibrahim (2007, p. 73) reported that this ethnic group settled around the Padas Valley in the 1800s. Currently, only a few Murut Tahol ethnic groups reside around the Padas Valley, as most have moved to towns or cities for economic opportunities (Informant: Mr. Unduh).

Lansaran

The word *Lansaran* originates from the Murut Tahol term *lumansar*, which means "to swing" (Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147). The term *lumansar* reflects the nature of this performance, which involves dancing on a board surface supported by bamboo, allowing for swinging and tossing motions in the longhouse (Ismail Abbas & Shaong, 1984, p. 85; Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147). According to informants Mr. Baalon and Mr. Andy, in the past, *Lansaran* was referred to as "*board (papan)*" because participants danced on the surface of a wooden board. In the Murut Tahol language, "trembling on the board" is expressed as *momolungun da papan*. Informant Mr. Andiawang explained that the term *Lansaran* has only been used in modern times.

Rutter (1922, p. 246) described *Lansaran* as a spring dance floor, meaning "a floor for jumping dances." His writings indicate that in the past, the *Lansaran* performance was held by the Murut ethnic group after headhunting activities to celebrate the victory of warriors who had successfully taken the heads of enemies. Upon returning home, the warriors would recite *kukui* (ritual poetry) while circling the stage. The enemy's head would be dried and hung from the roof of the *Lansaran* structure, where rituals were conducted to venerate the skull. Zainal Abidin (1998, p. 115) and Toh and Low (2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147) noted that the Murut ethnic group used *Lansaran* to worship human skulls brought back by warriors. According to Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (n.d.), *Lansaran* is described as a performance associated with the *ngayau* ceremony. A special floor, constructed from flexible wooden boards, is supported by additional wooden pieces beneath it. Singers and dancers stand on this floor, moving their feet rhythmically while singing *kukui* verses. The sound of wood striking the board serves as natural percussion during the performance.

The number of dancers involved in *Lansaran* varies depending on the size of the stage. Men and women take turns jumping to reach the *singkowoton*—a human skull suspended from the roof of the *Lansaran*. In contemporary times, the *singkowoton* is often replaced with a hornbill's beak (*tinduk singgung*) adorned with colorful beads (*selimuk*) (Figure 2) as a substitute for severed human heads or long-preserved skulls (Ismail Abbas & Shaong, 1984, p. 79; Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147). In modern performances, valuable items such as paper money, cigarettes, clothes, handkerchiefs, and other goods are suspended in place of skulls (Mohd Anis, 2004, p. 44; Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147).

The performance requires a dedicated space at the center of the Murut Tahol longhouse (Figure 4). The *Lansaran* platform measures between eight and 30 square feet and can accommodate up to 30 dancers. Informant Mr. Michael explained that *Lansaran* consists of three layers (Figure 5). The lowest layer, known as *sapunti*, serves as the base and holds approximately 40 small sticks called *lalahuon*. The middle section is constructed from *rumulus* wood, a type of long timber that must measure at least 35 feet. This wood is installed horizontally and lies flat. The structure is secured with rattan and topped with several boards known as *pinapanan*, forming the *Lansaran* floor (Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147). According to informants Mr. Andiawang and Mr. Kutu, the wood used for *Lansaran* must be straight and durable. This ensures the wood can produce resonant sounds when stretched and played upon.



Figure 2. Singkowoton
(Hornbill which is made of wood).
(Source: Researcher collection)



Figure 3. Singkowoton
(Human skull hang on the roof of Lansaran).
(Source: From site
<https://tallgalstravels.files.wordpress.com>)



Figure 4. Lansaran stage built in the middle
of longhouse.
(Source: Researcher collection)

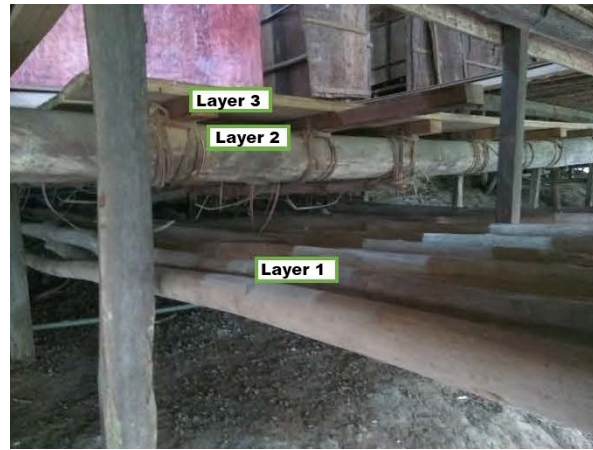


Figure 5. Three layer of Lansaran stage.
Layer 1: Lowest part (*sapunti*)
Layer 2: Middle part (*rumulus*)
Layer 3: Upper part (board)
(Source: Researcher collection)

Discussion

Lansaran was originally a traditional game of the Murut Tahol ethnic group (Informant: Mr. Nasib). According to him, in earlier times, village children enjoyed jumping on the surface of felled wood left outside the longhouse. Concerned for their children's safety, parents decided to construct a similar bouncy structure within the longhouse. As the children bounced on this surface, a rhythmic sound emerged. The elders began humming along to the rhythm created by the impact of feet on the wood. Over time, *Lansaran* evolved into an entertainment activity and became incorporated into Murut Tahol customs, such as wedding ceremonies, birth rituals, and spirit worship practices (Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147).

Seet (2017, p. 206) categorized *Lansaran* as a group game. The activity requires at least five participants to jump simultaneously on the *Lansaran* platform. Four participants occupy the corners, while one stands in the center, attempting to jump high enough to reach the *singkowoton* suspended from the roof. All players must coordinate their jumps with consistent tempo and force to ensure the platform's bounce is stable and strong, enabling the central player to leap higher. Without teamwork, reaching the *singkowoton* becomes challenging. Clarke (1952, p. 36) and Toh and Low (2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147) noted that *Lansaran*

participants require regular practice to minimize the risk of injury. Previously, this activity served as entertainment among the Murut ethnic group; today, it is often held as part of competitive events (List, 1963, p. 93; Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147).

Toh and Low (2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147) reported that *Lansaran* is no longer played solely for entertainment but has transformed into a competitive game. *Lansaran* competitions typically take place during festivals such as the Kaamatan Festival. Each team consists of at least five players. Four players stand at the corners of the platform, while one occupies the center, aiming to reach the *singkowoton* (Figure 6). The entire team jumps together, creating momentum for the central player, who attempts to leap as high as possible to claim the prize suspended above the platform.

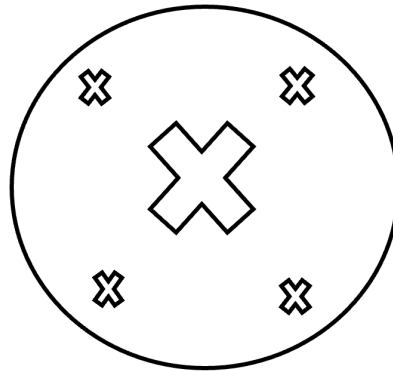


Figure 6. Lansaran stage position during traditional games (Source: Researcher modified)

During the head-hunting era, rituals were conducted involving human skulls. The ritual of worshipping the spirit of the enemy's skull, which was obtained by warriors during head-hunting, is known as the *kukui* ritual (Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147). More detailed information about the *kukui* ceremony, performed during the *mengayau* period, was obtained from several Murut Tahol informants in Tenom, including Mr. Michael, Mr. Andiwang, and Mr. Kutu. According to these informants, during the head-hunting era (prior to British colonization), villagers would listen for the cheering of returning warriors. Upon hearing this signal, preparations would begin in the longhouse to welcome them. When the warriors arrived, they were greeted and accompanied into the longhouse, carrying the enemy's head. Inside the longhouse, villagers would chant worship songs on the *Lansaran* stage, followed by the *kukui* ceremony involving the enemy's head. The head, once dried, would be stored at the top of the *Lansaran* stage. After the ceremony, the Murut community would celebrate with *tapai* (rice wine), dancing, and festivities that lasted until the following day.

For comparison, Rutter (1929, p. 192) described similar rituals for welcoming Murut warriors returning from head-hunting. According to Rutter, Murut warriors would cheer to signal their return, prompting villagers to prepare for their arrival. The villagers greeted the warriors outside the longhouse and escorted them inside. Upon entering, the *kukui* ritual was performed at the *Lansaran* (spring dancing-floor) (Rutter, 1929, p. 193). Warriors and women would dance in a circular pattern on the *Lansaran*. Rutter (1929, p. 192) further reported that the enemy's head was carried into the longhouse by women and placed at the center of the *Lansaran* stage. The head was then cooked, with the skin and brain removed until only the skull remained. The skull was dried and hung at the top of the *Lansaran* stage. Following the *kukui* ceremony, the Murut community celebrated for four days.

According to Mr. Andiwang and Mr. Kutu (informants), the act of jumping on the *Lansaran* stage to reach the skull at its peak was known as *humansar*. Over time, this activity became collectively known as *Lansaran*. The informants were uncertain when the term *humansar* transitioned to *Lansaran*, as it is used today. This performance is typically accompanied by the recitation of ceremonial poetry, known as *mongimun liliwa*, which translates to "drinking slowly" (Informant: Ms. Normadiah). Men and women alternate singing this ritual poetry. The content of the poetry includes praise for the host and serves as a motivational force during the *Lansaran* performance. The livelier the recitation, the higher participants jump, increasing their chances of reaching the *singkowoton* hanging from the roof. Reaching the *singkowoton* symbolizes the strength of the warrior (Figure 7).

Typically, three *mongimun liliwa* singers stand at the center of the *Lansaran* stage, while men form a circle around them, holding hands. Women stand between the male dancers (Ismail Abbas & Shaong,

1984, p. 78; Zainal Abiddin Tinggal, 1998, p. 115; Toh & Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p. 147). Together, men and women form a circle during the *Lansaran* performance (Figure 8). According to Mr. Kutu (informant), in the past, women would form a circle outside the men, but this practice is no longer observed.



Figure 7. Lansara performance as folk games
(Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photo/>)



Figure 8. Lansaran performance as ritual.
(Source: www.sabah.edu.my)

Lansaran performance has no specific time limit, this activity depends on the length and shortness of the content of their ceremonial poetry. Based on Mr. Baalon and Mr. Nasip, all Murut ceremonial poems including *kukui* (Table 1) are poems that are reciprocated between men and women according to the mood at that time. As such, there are many different lyrical versions of *kukui* ritual songs but with the same melody. According to another informant, this *kukui* melody is inherited from their ancestors through generations. This *kukui* is believed not to be sing randomly (Informant: Mr. Unduh). According to this informant, only the family that has obtained the head can sing it. If a person has no head and sing *kukui*, it is believed that their life will be shortened, in the Murut language is called *ra' wan*, which is a ritual fine.

Table 1: *Kukui* poem lyric

Kukui 1	
Lelaki <i>Kukui...Kukui....</i> <i>Kukuio taka ondou</i> <i>I ka liha sumuhut ko</i> <i>Aun hino raino</i> <i>Kaa ki naalapan Kukui</i> <i>Kukui kari</i> (cannot be translated by the informant)	Perempuan <i>Kukui...Kukui...</i> <i>Kukuyo taka rungin</i> <i>I ka liha huhuwangan mu</i> <i>Kukui rungin.</i> (cannot be translated by the informant)

Source: Mr. Nasib and Mr. Michael, Informant

The language used in *kukui* ritual poetry is the old language of the Murut Tahol ethnic group. Such language is believed to have supernatural powers to ward off evil spirits. Many words contained in the lyrics of the song are difficult or not understood by the modern Murut Tahol ethnic group. However, the language used in the modern Lansaran song is the everyday spoken language of the present-day Murut Tahol ethnic group. Such language has no ritual elements and is easy to understand.

At this time, Lansaran's performance was found to have undergone a change in its performance style. In the past, Lansaran performances were only performed on the Lansaran stage and the dancers would make a circle-shaped floor pattern. Nowadays, the Murut Tahol ethnic group does not live in longhouses anymore. Therefore, Lansaran stage is also not found in Murut ethnic villages. Due to the creativity of the Murut Tahol ethnic group, they have modified the Lansaran performance without using the Lansaran stage. The observation made by the researcher in Tolokoson village, Tenom found that the villagers here

performed Lansaran on the stage of Tolokoson village multipurpose hall. Female dancers lined up in front, singing songs while swinging their arms. The male dancers line up behind, banging sticks on the stage board. Their actions have produced a rhythm of sound similar to the sound of stomping produced by the dancers of the past, who danced on the surface of the Lansaran stage (Toh and Low, 2019, p. 58; 2021, p.147). This is a kind of creativity of the Murut Tahol ethnic villagers, who modified the Lansaran performance in the current situation without the Lansaran stage. Such a Lansaran performance lasts for about 10 to 15 minutes. What is clear here is that Lansaran is performed without choreography and floor patterns, as in other traditional dances (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Modern time, Lansaran performance without the Lansaran stage
(Source: Researcher collection)

This changes show that the Lansaran performance floor pattern has changed from a circular shape to two horizontal rows. The female dancers will line up in the front row while the male dancers form the back row. In terms of the song, most of the song lyrics these days are lyrics to welcome guests (Table 2). But in the head-hunting period, the songs that were sung were *kukui* ritual poems. The songs sung in today's Lansaran performances do not have ritual elements while the chanting of *kukui* poetry in the past was intended to drive away evil spirits around the ceremony site (Rutter, 2007, p. 192 and Ismail Abbas and Shaong, 1984, p. 90). Table 2 (Lagu *Lilingkut*) are examples of song sung in current Lansaran performances.

Table 2: Lyrics Transcription *Lilingkut*

Lirik lagu <i>Lansaran</i> dalam bahasa Murut Tahol	Maksud
<i>Ramayo takau kanawai, Ansuko takau poyo, Huto taka noyo kanawai, Mananggoi pahun Malaysia.</i>	Many of us to the leader, Support us to the government, We stand united with the government, Holding Malaysia.
<i>Parinkunungan ra kanawai, Inatong ahilong ramon, Luato no pahun Kemabong, Pati luwo pahun nu ulun bokon.</i>	Thank you Prime Minister, Come see/visit our area, Thank you for upgrading the Kemabong District, As in other areas.
<i>Kanawai ra kalansanan, Oko yak namarukuh, Namarukuh ra huang mai, I ka lair aliraan mai.</i>	Prime Minister we hope, Prime Minister whom we admire, Our unwavering support for, We never forget.

Source : Mr. Nasip, Informan

Lastly, there are some artists who have tried to develop Lansaran's performance art into a creative dance. The artists in question are Mr. Suhairin and Mr. Nasib (Informant). These two artists have thought of a way to show the Lansaran stage in their creative dance performances. Mr. Suhairin has produced a mini Lansaran stage (Figure 10). The creator of this stage wanted to show the Lansaran stage in a long house in

the olden days. The movements in this dance are based on Anggalang dance movements. In this creative performance, two female dancers, who are in a small Lansaran stage gently roll their arms. The hands of other female dancers outside the small Lansaran stage also curled gently (Figure 11). For male dancers, one hand is curled up and the other hand holding the stick will tap the stick on the surface of the stage board (Figure 12). Hitting the stick produces a rhythmic sound like Lansaran dancers of old who dance on the surface of the Lansaran stage.



Figure 10. Creative dance with
Lansaran elements
(Source: Researcher collection)



Figure 11. Movements of female
dancers
(Source: Researcher collection)



Figure 12. Movements of male dancers
(Source: Researcher collection)

Interestingly, this creative Lansaran performance has choreography and floor patterns. Choreography is the formation and organization of dance movements. In a choreography needs to be supported by aspects of the art show such as music, tatarias and costumes. Next, an important element to produce choreography is 'space'. 'Space' can only be produced through the elements of time (tempo), level (level) and floor patterns. In terms of space, Hawkins (1988, p. 43) notes:

...space is motionless and silent until movement within in introduce time and thereby give space a voice, a specific expression relative to the tempo and dynamic time of movement.

In this creative dance choreography, Suhairin bin Kadir (informant and processor) has used all aspects and elements to produce this dance. This dance is only danced in about seven minutes. In terms of music, he has produced music from the sound of wooden knocks, gong beats, warriors' cheers and folk songs. This music has described the atmosphere of the Murut ethnic longhouse construction. In terms of tatarias, male dancers are drawn with ethnic Murut tattoos all over their bodies to show their bravery while female dancers only use natural tatarias to show the modesty and gentleness of a woman. Murut motif chains are tied on the foreheads of female dancers and all male and female dancers have *tuwou* (a type of bird) feather tied in their hair (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Costume dancers
(Source: Researcher collection)

Next, Suhairin Abd Kadir (informant and processor) played the tempo (time), level (level) and floor pattern from the 'space' element in this creative dance. The dancers will dance in a different tempo, that is, the movement of the male dancers is faster than the movement of the women. The dancers will dance in different levels, for example the female dancers dance on the table that shows the long house while the male dancers dance on the performance stage only (Figure 14). In terms of floor patterns, this informant has formed many floor patterns in this creative dance. For example, at the beginning of this dance, only the female dancers are on the stage in the form of a horizontal line floor pattern (Figure 15). Next, when male dancers enter the stage, they will form a 'V' (Figure 16). In the middle of the dance, male and female dancers will dance in pairs in a 'zig zag' shape (Figure 17). This creative dance ends with a circular floor pattern surrounding two female dancers who dance on a small Lansaran stage (Figure 18) The idea of circle at the ending is the symbolic of Lansaran as ritual dance during head-hunting era.



Figure 14. Different level for female dancers and male dancers
(Source: Researcher collection)

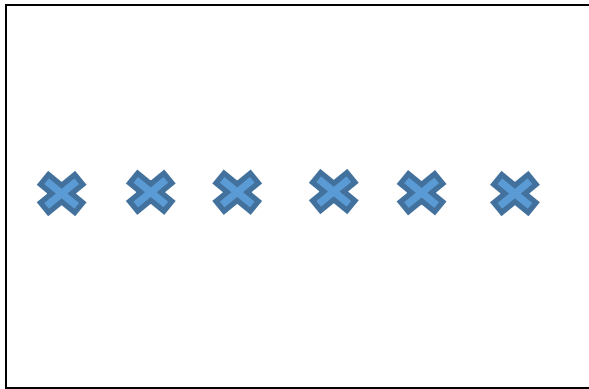


Figure 15. Dance position for female dancers
(Source: Researcher modified)

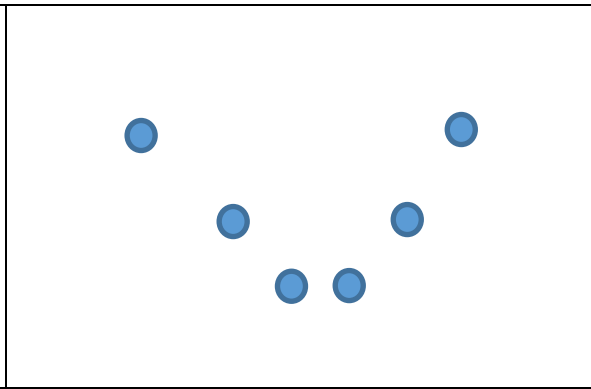


Figure 16. Dance position for male dancers
(Source: Researcher modified)

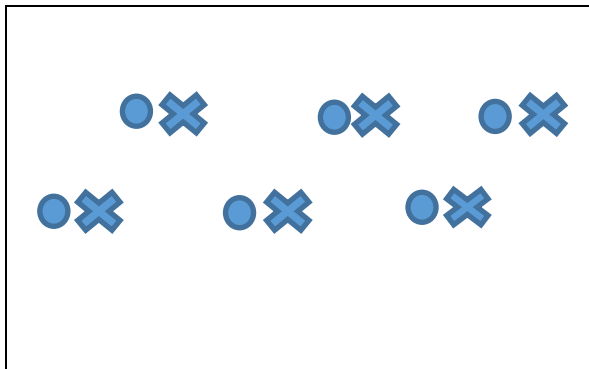


Figure 17. Dance position for the couple part
(Source: Researcher modified)

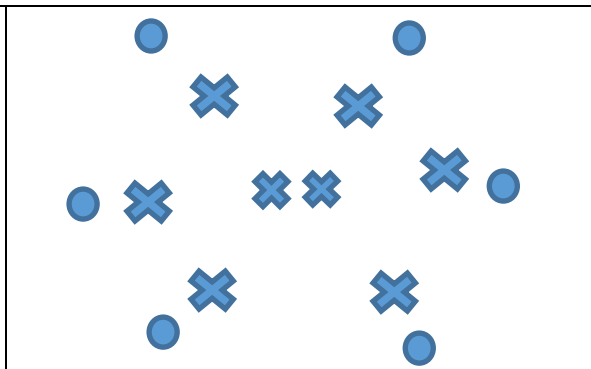


Figure 18. Dance position for ending (male and female dancers circling 2 female dancers)
(Source: Researcher modified)

If examined there are many traditional dances in various cultures in the world, which were originally a kind of traditional game, but in later days changed into a kind of dance. In the context of Sabah, the Magunatip dance belonging to the Murut ethnic group in Tenom, for example, was originally a type of game for farmers to relax and entertain themselves. This traditional game among farmers has been inspired into the Magunatip dance, which exists today (Suhaimi Magi, 2018). Schechner (2006, p. 81) in his study notes that traditional dances which are originally traditional games have roles such as entertainment and rituals. In terms of theory, this researcher noted:

Theoretically, the “first performance” is a situation, not an event or genre. Performance originates in the need to make things happen and to entertain; to pass time and to broadcast to the largest possible audience and to play in order to satisfy a deep personal, social, or religious need.

Suhaimi Magi (2018, p. 6) notes that traditional dances in the past often undergo changes according to the new times. An example stated by this researcher is the Indonesian Javanese classical dance in the past only danced in the Palace. Now, this dance has been developed and danced outside the palace. The change occurred in the space and time of the performance, this is because, in ancient times this dance was only danced when facing the king in royal ceremonies only. Nowadays, this dance is danced in front of an ordinary audience, and is increasingly developed so that a performance looks more creative and interesting.

Conclusion

Through field work in Kota Kinabalu District, Tenom District and Nabawan District, the researcher has collected the necessary data related to Lansaran, and then transcribed and documented information related to the origin, special characteristics, its connection with head-hunting culture, rituals and games as well as

Lansaran performance style changes. In addition, researchers have conducted library research such as articles, papers, journals, newspapers, books, and reference materials on websites. These primary and secondary source data have been used for analysis purposes related to the focus of this study.

Overall, this study obtained three important research findings. First, this study found that the Lansaran dance was originally a kind of game among children who jumped around and jumped on the logs that had been cut down and were left outside the longhouse. Then the villagers started building a Lansaran stage inside the longhouse because they were worried that their children would be injured while playing on the abandoned sticks. Such information is obtained from informants who have been interviewed.

In later days, the Lansaran stage built in the porch of the long house was also used in the *kukui* ceremony, which is a ceremony related to head-hunting activities. This ceremony aims to drive away evil spirits and skull spirits from disturbing the villagers. It is not known when this traditional game turned into a ritual ceremony. However, the Lansaran performed in the *kukui* ceremony has the characteristics of a dance performance, which is the uniform movement of legs, hands and body between the male and female dancers on the Lansaran stage. This performance was not accompanied by any music, but the sound of feet stomping on the surface of the Lansaran stage produced an original rhythmic beat. *Kukui chants* (ceremonial poems) sung by a group of singers known as *mongimun liliwa* produce musical melodies. All these features are unique to the Lansaran performance compared to other traditional dances in Sabah.

Changes to Lansaran's performance that are closely related to the influence of the British North Borneo Company (Chartered), religion and Chinese and Filipino trade have been identified. These external influences have caused changes in lifestyle, roles, musical instruments, costumes and accessories for the ethnic groups in Sabah. Based on the analysis of this study, Lansaran's performance also underwent changes. The *kukui* ceremony is no longer practiced due to the head-hunting culture being banned by the British government. As a result, the *kukui* ritual along with the Lansaran performance is no longer practiced by the Murut Tahol ethnic group. After the period of British administration, more and more ethnic Murut Tahol did not live in longhouses anymore. This change caused the Lansaran stage that was built in the long house to disappear just like that. Without this Lansaran stage, there would be no Lansaran performance. The Sabah Museum, Murut Cultural Center and tourism operators are working to build the Lansaran stage. Unfortunately, the Lansaran stage is only used as a playground for tourists or visitors.

Now, the Lansaran performance has developed into a stage performance through the Creative Lansaran dance developed by Mr. Suhairin Abd Kadir in 2017. It is hoped that this dance will continue to develop and be introduced to the public such as the Sumazau dance (Kadazan Penampang ethnicity), the Sazau dance (Papar Dusun ethnic), Sumayau dance (Lotud Tuaran ethnic group) and Magunatip dance (Murut ethnic group).

This research material is the Lansaran performance belonging to the Murut Tahol ethnic group. In addition to Lansaran, there are several types of traditional Murut sub-ethnic dances that have not yet been documented and studied by people. The traditional dances in question are Anggalang dance, Andui-andui dance, Lusung dance, Lumingo dance and Kumanda dance. These dances are suitable to be chosen by future researchers as their research material. Therefore, it is good that the traditional dances of the Murut sub-ethnicity are studied by other researchers with the aim of introducing and highlighting the traditional dances of the Murut ethnic group to the public.

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